

The Shot – Injectable Contraception

Where can you get the shot?

The “shot” is given by a doctor or qualified health care provider; it requires a prescription. Call your local family planning clinic for information.

Center for Health Training

1809 Seventh Avenue, Suite 400

Seattle, WA 98101-1341

206.447.9538 tel

206.447.9539 fax

www.centerforhealthtraining.org website

seattle@jba-cht.com email

How the shot works:

There are two types of injectable birth control:

- *Depo-Provera* is a shot that is given every 12 weeks. It contains one hormone, a form of progestin. Depo works by stopping your body from releasing an egg, so no egg is present to be fertilized; it also causes the cervical mucus (liquid at the opening of the uterus) to thicken, which can stop sperm from getting into the uterus.
- *Lunelle* is the once-a-month (28 - 30 days) shot. It contains two hormones, progestin and estrogen. It works the same way as Depo, but it causes a monthly bleeding cycle, like a regular period.

How to use the shot:



You are given an injection (shot) of *Depo* every 12 weeks. A back-up method should be used for the first 2 weeks after the first injection. Depo may be given immediately after delivery of a baby; however, if you are breast-feeding, it should be delayed 6 weeks. It can also be given immediately after an abortion.

Lunelle protects you from pregnancy for one month. The best time to have your next injection is 28 to 30 days after your previous one. However, you can receive your next injection within 23 to 33 days. *Lunelle* cannot be used by breast-feeding women. It can be given immediately after an abortion.

Effectiveness:

Both types of shots are highly effective as long as you continue to have your shots on time (every 12 weeks for Depo and every 4 weeks for *Lunelle*). If you get your shot on time, every time, the effectiveness rate is greater than 99%; fewer than 1 woman out of 100 will become pregnant in one year on the shot.

Benefits of the shot:

Depo and *Lunelle* are easy protection from pregnancy; you don't have to remember to take a pill every day. You and your partner do not have to interrupt your sexual activity to use this method. Getting the shot is private and convenient. You will have very light bleeding or no periods after several months on Depo; you will have monthly bleeding after several months on the monthly shot, *Lunelle*. Depo can be used while breast-feeding. The shot is excellent short-term birth control for women who need effective birth control while waiting for a sterilization or waiting to plan a pregnancy following rubella immunization.

There is no estrogen in Depo-Provera; women who cannot take estrogen because of contraindications or side effects

may wish to try Depo. Depo protects against ovarian cancer, and decreases the risk of ovarian cysts. Research may show that *Lunelle* protects against cancer as well.

Potential side effects and disadvantages:

With both types of shots, you may have irregular spotting or bleeding, especially during the first 6 months. You may also have slight weight gain or feel bloated, or have mood changes, nausea or occasional heavy menstrual periods. On *Lunelle* you could have breast tenderness or acne.

If you are getting either type of shot and want to get pregnant, you could be fertile within a month or two after your last injection. *Lunelle* hormones will completely leave the body within 60 - 90 days; Depo-Provera *may* stay in your body for up to 12 - 18 months and may continue to cause side effects.

Using injectable birth control will not give you protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and syphilis.

Potential risks:

Some women should not use the shot because of some health conditions they may have. Ask your doctor or health care provider. Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular (blood clots, heart attacks, strokes) side effects especially for women over 35. Women who use combination hormonal contraception are strongly advised to not smoke.

